

ALL GLORIES TO ŚRĪ ŚRĪ GURU AND GAURANGA!

Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and His Mercy

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*anarpita-carīm cirāt karuṇayāvatīrṇaḥ kalau samarpayitum unnatojjvala-rasām
sva-bhakti-śriyam hariḥ puraṭa-sundara-dyuti-kadamba-sandīpitaḥ sadā
hṛdaya-kandare sphuratu vaḥ śacī-nandanah*

“The elevated, effulgent taste of sacred rapture is the wealth of devotional love; the Lord never gives it at any time; yet, out of His mercy in this age of quarrel, to distribute this treasure to the world, He has descended in His golden form. The son of Sachi is like a lion; May He dwell in the cave of your heart forever.”

—Shri Rūpa Gosvāmi; Vidagdḥ Mādhav Nāṭaka

Benefits from hearing the pastimes of Lord Chaitanya

yebā nāhi bujhe keha, śūnite śūnite seha, ki adbhuta caitanya-carita

kṛṣṇe upajibe prīti, jānibe rasera rīti,

śūnilei baḍa haya hita

Shrila Krishna Das Goswami says that even if you do not know anything about spiritual matters, it does not matter. He is begging you to please hear the pastimes of Lord Chaitanya. By the continuous hearing of such pastimes, you will naturally develop eternal love of Godhead, and you will be able to secure the duty of service to the lotus feet of that most melodious Radha-Krishna. This mellow is most transcendental and it is the main objective of all living souls.

Editorial

The reader may be cognisant that the All Blissful and Absolute Love of Godhead can be attained in this age of quarrel (kali-yuga) only by the chanting of the Holy Name of Lord Sri Hari. No other means can bestow this highest perfection. Love for Godhead, for which even Sri Brahma and Lord Shiva yearn, is rarer than the rarest. The door-opener of that priceless treasure, Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, has inundated the entire world – not just the human beings but all the living entities – with the waves of the ocean of Transcendental Divine Love. It is very difficult to comprehend the magnanimity of the giver of this treasure.

It may be easy to trace the other side of an ocean but the pastimes of Lord Sri Chaitanya are limitless. Sri Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami, in spite of his voluminous composition about Sri Chaitanya's pastimes in Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita, says, "I could barely touch the surface of the ocean of Mahaprabhu's pastimes." If these are the feelings of such an elevated soul, what then of people like us, whose intelligence and capability falls short of understanding such sublime pastimes?

Despite such shortcomings, we are trying to make an attempt to present a glimpse of Lord Chaitanya's pastimes in this book. Just as the shopkeepers in the market exhibit the best items on display so that the passers-by get attracted to enter into the shop, our attempt here is to present a few of His pastimes so that one may want to dive deep into the ocean of the Lord's pastimes by studying scriptures like Sri Chaitanya Bhagavat and Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita. We wish that our humble yet sincere endeavour to create interest in the minds of the reader will be successful.

Servant of the servant of the Lord, Tridandi Bhikshu B. S. Nishkinchana

Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu

There was a time in India, when it was very difficult for a gentle lady to save her self-respect and for a gentleman to maintain his prestige and name, as the rulers of the nation used to take undue advantage of their power and position. The rulers used to snatch money, women, wealth, etc., whenever they felt like it, from anybody living in the particular area they ruled. Muslims were invading India and it was chaos everywhere. Followers of Bhagavata Dharma, Bhakti Dharma and Sanatana Dharma were nowhere to be seen. All sort of illicit acts were being performed at the places of worship. Everybody was indulging in sense gratification. The followers of Hinduism and Islam were at loggerheads. Elevated scholars like Chaturvedi's, Bhattacharya's, Chakravarti's were no longer knower of the real purport of the Vedic scriptures. People used to chant the names of demigods such as Chandi and others throughout the night. This was the only religious act they knew. If someone recited the names of Govinda, Pundarikaksha, etc. while bathing, he was considered a pious soul. People at that time were, however, not deprived of money. They would spend a lot of money on the marriage of their children, marriage of puppets and dolls, and even the marriage of pet animals, yet they refrained from donating any money to devotees or for the service of the Supreme Lord. Whether a scholar, elderly, or child, none of them chanted the name of Lord Hari. All were devoid of devotion to Lord Vishnu. Fools and sinners would never perform any devotional service. Instead, they would make fun of the saintly persons who would chant the name of Lord Krishna in congregation, performing Sankirtan. They used to make harsh comments on these devotees of Supreme Lord. They would say: "Why are these people shouting the name of Lord? In these four months of rainy season, Lord takes rest and their screaming will disturb His sleep, thereby annoying Him, and thus He will create havoc in the country." Some took up these activities as a means to earn livelihood, and wanted to tear apart the homes of devotees and submerge them in the Ganges. During the medieval period, i.e. around 11th century A.D., India entered a dark time when a lot of adverse rites came into existence in the various religions. The glories of Hinduism lay ashen. Untruthfulness and cheating in the name of religion became common practices. The concept of caste by birth and untouchability reached its peak. 'Untouchables' were openly denounced. People used to shun lower castes. Lower castes were even barred from fetching water from public wells, as well as

from offering flowers unto the temple deities. Muslim clerics placed more emphasis on converting Hindus to Muslims, rather than properly following their own religious system of daily prayers. Due to their ignorance, they were foolishly engaged in executing these conversions, and did so by any means necessary, whether fair or unfair, simply to achieve their goal. Men were not known for their humanity but for their adherence to the so-called 'caste-system'.

However, everything has a limit. Excess of anything is always bad, but when crime is in excess, it is even worse. Performance of sinful activities always produces a bad reaction, the scriptures confirm this. It is highly unlikely that the most merciful Supersoul just watches while his dear ones (souls) burn in their own misery. Upon hearing repeated calls and prayers of devotees like Shri Advaita Acharya, and to rescue the ignorant souls from the pangs of material miseries, Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (most merciful Gaurasundar) appeared to distribute that most precious treasure of His Own Abode 'Goloka', 'Love of Godhead', to all. He appeared at a very auspicious time, on Phalguni Purnima (Full moon), during evening of 18th February 1486 (1406 sakabda) at Shridham Mayapur (Nadia). Everything was auspicious at that time, and what wonderful pastimes the Lord exhibited! At the time of His appearance, almost everybody (whether theist or atheist) was chanting in jubilation 'Hari – bol', 'Hari - bol'. Some were blowing conch-shell; some were taking dip in Ganges, as at that time there was a Lunar Eclipse. Lord appeared as the son of Mother Sachi Devi and Father Shri Jagannath Mishra. Before the appearance of Lord Gaurasundar, eight daughters appeared in their house one by one, but none of them survived. After those girls, a son who was named Vishvarup, appeared in their house. Since childhood He was expert at everything, but was not attached to anything. One day He left His house and renounced the material world. Nilambar Chakravarti, the maternal grandfather of Lord Gaurasundar was a renowned astrologer. When Lord Chaitanya appeared, he predicted that this boy would be a great personality. He further said that this boy will take care of the entire world for a long time, thus He should be called 'Vishvambhar'. The consort of Shri Advaita Acharya, Shrimati Sita Devi named Him 'Nimai', as He appeared under a Neem tree (a particular tree which has a lot of qualities, amongst which are medicinal qualities.) The child Vishvambhar was extremely beautiful and had a golden complexion, thus ladies called Him Gaura, Gauranga or Gaurasundar. In His later pastimes as a sannyasi (renunciate), He was known as Shri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

The wonderful method of preaching Krishna's Name

After filling the hearts of Sachi Devi and Shri Jagannath Mishra with transcendental pleasure by dint of His childhood pastimes, Shri Lord Chaitanya grew from an infant to a young child. The women in the neighbourhood were always attracted to Him because of His charming beauty, and, therefore, they always stayed close to Him.

Lord Chaitanya, the preacher of Yuga-dharma (Harinam – Sankirtan) and Founder of the Sankirtan, preached the name of Lord Hari, even as a child. Whenever he wept, nobody could console Him, until people began chanting the name of Lord Hari. Eventually everybody understood that if one would chant the name of Lord Hari, Nimai would immediately begin to smile, rather than crying. By this pastime, Nimai preached that if one wishes to please Lord, he should chant the name of Shri Hari.

Fasting is meant for us, not for the Lord

Whenever Nimai would cry, He would stop if somebody started chanting the name of Lord Hari in His proximity. One day, however, He did not stop crying, even though lot of women from nearby houses gathered around Him and chanted loudly the name of Lord Hari. After some time, He said, “if you wish to please Me (make me stop crying), then please listen, today is fasting for Ekadashi, Shri Jagadish Pandit and Shri Hiranya Pandit are observing the fast. They are preparing a lot of dishes to offer to Lord Vishnu. If you can bring those delicious dishes to Me, I shall be happy.” People almost turned a blind eye to this. But word spread and Shri Jagadish and Shri Hiranya also heard about it. They wondered how from so far away the boy came to know about all the dishes

they had prepared, and how He came to know about Ekadashi. They thought that it could be that Lord Gopal (Lord Krishna as child) had appeared in the body of that boy, thus they brought all the dishes and served them personally to Nimai. Lord Nimai was very pleased to enjoy those variety of dishes. By this pastime the Lord taught us that on the day of Ekadashi, one must prepare a variety of dishes (as done by Shri Jagadish and Shri Hiranya) to offer to the Lord. We observe this fast in order to please the Lord, but for whom should The Absolute Godhead observe a fast? Fasting is meant for us, not for the Lord.

Gaur-Gopal eats mud

As Nimai grew up, He began to walk independently, but He also grew mischievous. One day, Sachi Devi gave Nimai a piece of Sandesh (a type of sweet) to eat. Then she went to attend her household duties. Nimai however, did not eat that sweet; instead He started eating mud. When Sachi Devi saw, she came running and forcefully opened the mouth of Nimai in order to take out the mud, which He had eaten. This happened in almost the same way as it had happened with Mother Yashoda. This time however, Lord Krishna did not reveal the universe to His mother, but He said, “Since sweets or earth are nothing but variations of that same material element - earth, why do we eat one and not the other? This body is made up of earth and so are all the eatables which we consume to keep ourselves healthy, so if I had consumed earth instead of sweets, what is the problem? Mother Sachi was astonished when she heard Nimai talk like this. She asked Him who had given Him that knowledge. She told Him that the various transformations of earth such as rice, dal, wheat etc. make us healthy, but that earth if consumed as it is, makes us. She further explained that an earthen pot, which is a form of earth, can hold and store water, but same earth, in the form of a lump will absorb all the water and then break. Then Nimai smiled and said, “Mother! I have understood. I won’t eat earth anymore, whenever I am hungry I will ask for your milk”.

Nimai takes rest on Lord Shesh (the Lord in Serpent

Form)

Yashoda-Nandan, Lord Krishna used to play in the courtyard of Nand Maharaj and sometimes, crow came to snatch the chapatti (wheat bread) from His hands (a pastime). Similarly, one day Nimai was playing in the courtyard of Mother Sachi, when suddenly a large black snake appeared in the courtyard and laid there by spreading its body. Nimai ran towards it as an unwitting child, with His anklets tinkling and a belt around His stomach, and He laid down on the Snake. People were scared when they saw the child laying on the Snake. Mother Sachi and Shri Jagannath Mishra were overwhelmed with worry and were praying for Lord Garuda to appear, Who is an enemy of snakes, whereas child Nimai was playfully laughing while on Snake. When the Snake, who was actually Lord Ananta, saw that the devotees were worried, He left immediately. Nimai ran after Him to catch Him, but fearful people quickly picked up Nimai and blessed Him, and then proceeded to chant some Vedic Hymns for Nimai's safety.

The sound of anklets and footprints of Lord Vishnu

One day, Shri Jagannath Mishra asked his son Nimai to bring him a book. Nimai was pleased and happily went to fetch the book. At the same moment Mother Sachi and Shri Jagannath Mishra heard melodious tinkling sound of anklets, coming out of their house. Nimai ran outside to play after handing over the book to His father. There was another strange incident. When Lady Sachi and Shri Jagannath Mishra went inside the room, they saw that wherever Nimai had put His foot, there were prints of flag, conch, and other signs of His divinity. They were astonished to see all this, but being under the spell of Yoga-Maya (the Lord's internal potency), they did not take these prints as of their son, but of the Lord. So they presumed that the Footprints came from Lord Damodar's Shaligram (their household Deity) in their house. They thought, "maybe Lord Shaligram is roaming about in our house." The couple was excited at the thought and they organized a bathing ceremony and festival in the Lord's honour.

The child Nimai and His eight-handed Form

One day, a wandering mendicant brahmin came to Shri Jagannath Mishra's house after having visited many holy places. He used to worship Lord Gopal with the eight-syllable mantra (hymn) and whatever he received, he always first offered to the Deity before eating it himself. Seeing a brahmin at his doorstep, Shri Mishra immediately got up and offered obeisances. He washed the brahmin's feet and offered him a place to sit. Mother Sachi gave him a lot of items for cooking. The brahmin then prepared different dishes to offer to his Gopal. After he had finished cooking, he began to meditate upon his Gopal to accept the offerings (food), but as soon as he did so, child Nimai came crawling on his knees and began eating the food offerings. Seeing this, brahmin yelled out. When Jagannath Mishra saw what happened he was furious, and he ran to punish Nimai, but the brahmin stopped him. Shri Mishra apologised for Nimai's mischief and humbly requested the brahmin to prepare the offerings again. The brahmin obliged and started again. Shri Jagannath Mishra dropped Nimai at their neighbours' house so that Nimai wouldn't be able to disturb the brahmin anymore. This time, as soon as brahmin had offered his preparations to Gopal and began chanting his eight-syllable hymn, Nimai appeared from out of nowhere and again began eating the offerings. When the brahmin saw he shouted 'ruined', 'ruined'. Shri Jagannath Mishra felt ashamed and he began to punish Nimai. Then the brahmin explained to him, "Your child is not to be blamed; He is too young to understand anything. On top of that, providence may simply have it that there is not to be any food for me today." When Nimai's elder brother Shri Vishvarup requested the brahmin in His pleasant voice to prepare dishes once again to offer to the Lord, the brahmin, who was mesmerized by Vishvarup's beauty and sweet voice, once again cleaned the place and began cooking the offerings for third time. By now, it was already late at night and everybody was sound asleep. The brahmin was now cooking behind closed doors and Shri Jagannath Mishra was keeping watch outside the room as a safety measure. But he was also drowsy. After some time, the brahmin again recited the Gopal hymn and offered the cooked dishes to Gopal. Immediately Nimai appeared and began eating the rice. The brahmin was about to scream again, when Nimai cut him off by saying, "What a strange devotee you are. First you summon Me by reciting

the hymn, and then when I come, you start screaming.” Then Nimai exhibited His eight-handed form to the brahmin. The brahmin fell unconscious by experiencing the opulence of the Lord. The brahmin saw the small child Nimai assuming a marvellous form, where He had eight hands (arms), holding conch, disc, mace, lotus, holding His flute in two hands and using two more hands to hold butter in one and eat that butter with the other. Later, Mahaprabhu asked the brahmin not to disclose this secret to anybody.

The two thieves who stole the biggest Thief

A poet once quoted about the stealing pastimes of Lord Krishna in Vraja,

“He is the owner of millions of universes, yet, He is a thief, a most crooked thief, and He is master of all in stealing”

This Thief of Vraja does not reveal Himself during His pastimes in Navadvip. He is making others chant the name of Hari, on the pretext of crying and sometimes secretly, He has personal audience with His devotees. One day, this Thief was roaming outside His house, wearing precious ornaments. Two thieves saw Him and made a plan to steal the jewellery. They allured Him with ‘Sandesh’ (a milk sweet) and then proceeded to carry Him on their shoulders, far away from His house. The Lord however, exhibited His potency, and the thieves forgot the way to their home. After wandering for a long time, they reached Shri Jagannath Mishra’s house, mistaking it for their own house, and took Nimai off their shoulders. Then they suddenly realized their error, and fearing to get caught they quickly ran away. The neighbourhood women, who were looking for Nimai for quite some time, at last found Him, picked Him up and took Him inside His house.

Nimai’s education and mischief

Eventually, Shri Jagannath Mishra gave Shri Gaur-Gopal some mud-chalk ('Khadia' –a lump of chalk) and organized the ear- piercing ceremony (Karanvedha Samskara) as well as the ceremony of shaving the head (Mundana – Chura Samskara). Teaching Nimai was comparable with trying to illuminate the Sun with a lamp. Nimai could rewrite anything simply after taking one glance at the text. In just two days He learnt the whole formation of words and He began writing "Rama, Krishna, Murari, Mukunda, Vanamali, etc. Everybody would lose themselves in the sound of His melodious voice whenever He would recite any vocabulary or the alphabet. He used to go for a dip in Ganges along with His friends, but the people there were tired of His mischief. He used to hide the clothes of people, or when somebody was meditating while standing in Ganges, He would pull his legs from underwater. Sometimes, He poured sand on people coming out of the water after a bath. When maidens went for any offerings to mother Ganges, then child Nimai would ask them: "Why are you offering prayers to Mother Ganges or Mother Durga?" He would tell them that if they would offer prayers to Him instead He would grant them all of their desires, and that Mother Ganges and Durga Devi are His servants. "Even Lord Shiva is my servant", He would say. After telling them all this, Lord Gaura-Hari in the form of a child would snatch the things used for offering, such as sandalwood, flower garlands, etc. and would proceed to wear those items. He used to snatch sweets, rice, banana, etc. from them and then say, "I give you this boon, that you will get a handsome, intelligent, young and charming husband, a long life and seven sons." The young maidens externally displayed signs of anger towards Him, but in their hearts they were satisfied. When, out of fear for Nimai, some younger maiden ran away with offerings meant for a demigod, He would address her in loud voice, "You will get an old husband with many wives." After hearing this, the maidens would offer everything to Nimai, taking Him to be a divine being. In this way Lord Gaura-Hari exhibited His true identity as Supreme Lord in a jesting way, but nobody could understand it due to His bewildering potency Yoga-Maya.

Nimai sits on a pile of used pots and gives a sermon like Dattatreya

Shri Jagannath Mishra and Mother Sachi were very morose due to Shri Vishvarup's acceptance of the renounced order of life. To please them, Nimai began to study sincerely. Knowing the unparalleled intelligence of Nimai, Shri Jagannath Mishra was actually displeased by Nimai's efforts, out of fear that once Nimai would understand the essence of all scriptures, He would learn that this world is full of miseries and might follow His brother's footsteps. Thus he asked Mother Sachi to stop sending Nimai to school. Nimai was furious, and to express His anger, He went and sat on a pile of used cooking pots and utensils in protest. His friends quickly went to inform Mother Sachi. She came in an instant and asked Nimai to come out of that place and why He was sitting in such a dirty place. Then Nimai remarked innocently, "Because I am not allowed to go to school, I am illiterate and foolish. So how can I know what is pure and what is impure?" Then Lord Nimai gave a lecture to Mother Sachi, just like the Avatara of Vishnu called Datatreya. Once mother Sachi saw that Nimai wasn't going to come out, she pulled Him out, bathed Him and asked Shri Mishra to start sending Nimai to school again so that their dear Child would not remain illiterate and foolish.

Nimai's pastimes as a teacher

Very soon Nimai finished His studies and started exhibiting His pastimes as a teacher. He used to teach thousands of students at Navadvip. The logical arguments as explained by Nimai Pandit were understood only by Shri Ganga das Pandit. All others, students and teachers alike, were unable to refute or answer His unparalleled intelligent arguments and questions. Alongside His education, Nimai Pandit also preached moral values to His students. Any student attending His lectures without wearing Tilak on his forehead, would be ridiculed by Him to such an extent, that the next day that student wouldn't dare repeating the mistake. Nimai Pandit quoted from the Vedas, "A forehead without 'Tilaka' is like a graveyard or crematorium." Then He would send that student home for the proper rituals for applying 'Tilak' on the forehead. One day when Nimai was returning after teaching, He met Shrila Ishvar Puri-pad. This was their first meeting and they were mutually attracted towards each other. People were already attracted to Shrila Ishvar Puri-pad, as He was exhibiting wonderful

symptoms of Love of Godhead. Nobody knew why, but Shrila Ishvar Puri-pad asked Nimai a lot of questions, and he was pleased to hear the correct answers. By Nimai's request, Shrila Ishvar Puri-pad visited Nimai's house. Mother Sachi served him sumptuous Krishna Prasadam.

When Shrila Ishvar Puri-pad was staying at Shri Gopinath Acharya's house in Navadvip, He asked Nimai one day that it would be nice if He, since He was a learned scholar, could have a look at one of his written works named "Shri Krishna Lilamrita" and correct it where necessary. However, Nimai has nothing but praises for a devotee of Lord. Therefore, He very humbly replied, "if one looks for corrections in the statements of a pure devotee, he is a great sinner. Thus, no one can dare to correct the writings of a pure devotee like Shrila Ishavar Puri-pad."

A scholar learns about Gauranga in a dream

One fine evening, Nimai Pandit was sitting on the banks of the Ganges with His students, just as the moon shines amongst the stars. During that time, a scholar by the name of Keshav Kashmiri visited Navadvip. He was blessed by mother Saraswati and had defeated all the scholars of various areas in debate, and they gave him a certificate declaring him victorious. The scholars of Navadvip, for the fear of being defeated, sent him to the young Nimai Pandit, and so he approached Nimai Pandit, full of pride. Nimai paid respect to him and politely asked him to sit. During the course of their discussions, Nimai asked him to write some poetry in glorifying river Ganges. The scholar at that very instant composed and uttered one hundred verses in praise of mother Ganges. After hearing the poem, Lord Mahaprabhu quoted one out of those one hundred verses and asked Keshav Kashmiri if any corrections were required for that particular verse. The scholar was already very surprised that this Pandit was able to recall the verse, and answered proudly that the verse had no need for any corrections, since he knew it to have all perfections. Then Mahaprabhu pointed out five perfections and five corrections of that particular verse. By stating the corrections, Lord Mahaprabhu bestowed His mercy on the scholar and rescued

him from the threefold miseries of the world. The scholar was ashamed to learn about the flaws in his work, and became silent. After returning home, he prayed to the goddess Saraswati, and with surrender he said, “Mother! Until this day, by your blessings, I had not been defeated by anyone. But today a young boy, a teacher of grammar to young children, defeated me in debate.” At night, Saraswati appeared in his dream and said, “You need not be sad. Nimai Pandit is not an ordinary scholar. He is verily the omnipotent Lord Himself. I am just His maidservant. You must immediately go and surrender unto Him and pray for His mercy.”

Auspicious Marriage

When Vishvambhar turned 18 years of age, His mother searched for a suitable match for Him. A resident of Navadvip, a scholar by the name Shri Vallabhācharya, sent his wife to Mother Sachi with the proposal of their only daughter Shrimati Lakshmipriya as a suitable bride. Mother Sachi agreed with pleasure. On the day of marriage, everywhere, not just in the house of mother Sachi it looked as if goddess Lakshmi had descended across all of Navadvip. However, some time after the marriage, when Nimai Pandit went on a trip to east Bengal along with His students, on the banks of the river Padma, He took a very long time to return to His wife. Shrimati Lakshmipriya could not bear the agony of separation from Her Lord anymore, and departed from this material world. Mother Sachi grieved a lot over this loss. Therefore, in order to please His mother, Shri Gaurahari agreed to her proposal for marrying Shrimati Vishnupriya, daughter of the scholar Shri Sanatan Mishra, a devotee of Lord Vishnu and a pious man. There were huge celebrations, and all the expenses were covered by the fortunate Shri Buddhimanta Khan.

How can an astrologer predict anything about the Omnipresent?

One day, a learned astrologer came to the house of Shri Mahaprabhu. Mahaprabhu paid His respects to him and seated him. Then the Lord asked him, “Who was I in my previous birth? Please have a check and tell Me.” The astrologer did his calculations and began meditating. In his meditation he saw a marvellously effulgent deity, who is the shelter of infinite Vaikuntha’s and universes, Who is the ultimate, the Supersoul and no other than God Himself. The astrologer was left spellbound when he saw that form of the Lord.

He was unable to speak for a while. The Lord then asked him again, causing the astrologer to regain his senses, and he, thus replied “In Your previous birth you were the Absolute Godhead with all opulence, and the shelter of the whole world. The form which you had in previous birth, is same as that of your present appearance. Lord Nityanand is also one of your forms, but one cannot judge that very easily.” The Lord laughed and told Him, “You do not know anything. I was a cowherd boy in my last birth. I appeared in the house of a cowherd man, and I used to go to graze cows as their caretaker. With such good deeds, I have now appeared in the house of a Brahmin.”

Then that astrologer said, “I saw this. But I was surprised to see your opulence in that cowherd form. I see that form (Shri Krishna) and this form (Shri Gauranga) as one and the same. Sometimes, I do see some difference. This is all due to your potency (Maya). Whosoever you may be, I offer my respectful obeisances unto you.” Lord Mahaprabhu was pleased and He bestowed His mercy upon him.

The Master of the universe accepts a spiritual master

In those days, most of the residents of Navadvip were atheists. There were a few devotees but they faced a lot of criticism from the atheists. Despite their criticism, those devotees worried about their welfare, but they were apprehensive about associating with them because of their atheism. Shri Gauranga was apprehensive as well, looking at the apprehension of His devotees. The Lord

decided to reveal Himself. He took permission from His mother and started for 'Gaya' along with His students, on the pretext of offering oblations to His departed father. On the way, He exhibited a pastime of fever, to reveal the significance of water collected after washing a Brahmin devotee's feet. After reaching 'Gaya' He went to the Punapuna river (Tirtha) and offered oblations to His father. While offering oblations at Brahma-kunda, the priest narrated the glories of the Lord. At that instant Mahaprabhu became ecstatic. Tears began to flow from His eyes and He began trembling out of extra-ordinary symptoms of love for Godhead. From here, Lord Gauranga began to reveal the devotion for Lord Krishna. Just as Lord Gauranga was exhibiting such ecstatic emotions, Shrila Ishvar Puri-pad arrived. The Lord offered him obeisances and Shrila Puri-pad embraced Him.

Lord Mahaprabhu revealed the purpose of his Gaya visit by telling Shrila Ishvar Puri-pad, "The moment I had an audience with you, my journey became successful. One is rescued and liberated, if one has offered oblations (after his death) to his descendents, etc. at a holy place (Tirtha), but merely by your audience, numerous forefathers are liberated. Thus there is nothing as holy as you. You even purify the holy places, thus I am surrendering my body unto you. Out of your causeless mercy, please liberate me and shower me with the love for the Lotus feet of Shri Krishna and enable me to taste His mellows." By this, Mahaprabhu is illustrating that associating with devotees, is actually the foremost fruit of a visit to a holy place. If someone is not fortunate to have an audience with the spiritual master, he will not be able to understand the taste of surrendering unto the spiritual master, nor the taste of serving the Supreme Lord. Charity, meditation, taking a bath in holy rivers, offering oblations to forefathers, standard prayers, etc. are required until we develop a strong interest in topics relating to Shri Krishna, which can be achieved by associating with devotees.

After completing all the rituals for offering oblations to His departed forefathers, Shri Nimai Pandit went back to His place of stay and cooked some food. He then served that Prasadam (foodstuff offered to Krishna) to Shri Ishvar Puri-pad and then took him to a secluded place, where He requested mantra- initiation (diksha) from him who was also thinking about this. He initiated Nimai Pandit with pleasure. Then Shri Nimai circumambulated Shri Puri-pad and prayed for granting Him love for Godhead and His full surrender unto Him. Nimai Pandit, the Spiritual Master of all, thus exhibited the pastimes of accepting a spiritual

master. By doing so, Lord Mahaprabhu illustrated to the people of this world that no one is able to obtain entrance into the abode of Lord Krishna, without surrendering completely unto the lotus feet of a pure devotee.

One day, at a secluded place, when Lord Gauranga was meditating on His worshipable mantra, He suddenly began calling out loudly, “Hey Krishna! Where are you? Krishna re! Baap re! Lord of my life, Hari! Where are you hiding after stealing my heart?” Thus Nimai began to cry out of ecstasy. Nimai Pandit, who is otherwise very calm, began to roll on the ground and cried loudly. His accompanying students tried to pacify Him, but Nimai said, “All of you go home, I am not going to live any more. I have decided to go to Mathura, where I will get my Lord Shri Krishna Chandra, Who is my life.” After that He started running towards Mathura and calling upon Krishna! Where is Krishna? After few moments, there was a crackling sound from the sky and a voice said, “O greatest among Brahmins! Please do not go to Mathura now. The time has not yet come for you to renounce household life. For some time You have to preach the Love of Godhead at the place of your appearance.” Having lost Himself in divine rapture, Mahaprabhu regained consciousness and returned to His place of stay. He took permission from Shrila Ishvar Puri-pad and then started for Navadvip along with His students.

The change in Gauranga Deva

After returning from ‘Gaya’, Shri Gauranga was completely changed. He now always remained absorbed in the ecstatic feelings of separation from Krishna. He would faint several times a day while chanting, ‘O Krishna! Where are you?’ He stopped teaching and reading. After the repeated requests of His students, Shri Gauranga began teaching again, but He could not utter anything other than ‘Krishna’. He would say that there is nothing anywhere but Krishna’s name. While teaching class He would even explain grammar in relation to Krishna. Eventually, He asked His students to leave Him forever and told them that they had studied and learnt together for so many days, but from that moment onwards, all of them should chant the Holy Name of Krishna only.

The Sankirtan Movement of Shri GaurangMaahaprabhu

Lord Gauranga descended for a reason – i.e. to preach the ‘Yuga-dharma’ (the particular process of worship to be adopted for that specific age/period/time) of chanting the name of Lord Hari, for the topmost benefit of the people of Kali-yuga (the current age, also known as the iron age). The initial phase of this Yuga-dharma started in Navadvip. As soon as it began, it spread like wildfire. The epicenter of the Sankirtan movement was the house of Shrivas Pandit. That is why Shrivas - Angan (Shrivas’s house) is famous as ‘Sankirtan Rasasthali’ (place of congregational chanting and dancing), until this very day. Mahaprabhu exhibited all of His potencies amongst His many devotees at this place. There He gave lectures, sang, danced and exhibited various symptoms of love of Godhead. Since He was performing the pastimes of a devotee, there were a few problems, which were resolved accordingly.

Shri Nityanand Prabhu and Shri Haridas Thakur as preachers of the Holy Name

Initially Mahaprabhu asked Shri Nityanand Prabhu and Shri Haridas Thakur to go door to door, city to city, village to village and ask people to chant Hare Krishna, to devote their lives to Krishna, and accept the Name of Krishna in their daily lives. He told them that nobody should be bereft of this love for Godhead and they should report back to Mahaprabhu on the proceedings and developments. One day they met two drunken hoodlums named Jagai and Madhai. People said that there was no sin in this world, of which these two had not been guilty of committing. However, despite their excessive intoxication, they had never committed an offence towards any devotee, nor had they blasphemed any devotee of Lord. That is why most munificent Lord Nityanand, though hit on the head by those hoodlums, arranged for the mercy of Mahaprabhu to be bestowed on those two. Later on, by the causeless mercy of

Lord Nityanand Prabhu and Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, they became pure devotees.

Liberation of muslim cleric Sirajuddin (Chand Kazi)

Hussein Shah reigned over Bengal between 1493 and 1519 AD. During that time he invaded Orissa and his forces tortured and killed many people. These activities disturbed his ministers, in particular Dabir Khasa and Sakar Mallika (They became Rupa Goswami and Sanatan Goswami after surrendering unto Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu). When Hussein Shah invaded Orissa, he destroyed all the temples over there. In Bengal, the governor of Navadvip, Cleric Sirajuddin (Chanda Kazi) strongly objected to the ‘Sankirtan movement’ of Mahaprabhu. He even broke the clay drum (Mridanga) of the devotees when they were performing Sankirtan, and warned them that if they would continue with such activities in his area, he would arrange for a severe punishment for them.

When this news reached Mahaprabhu, He became furious. He asked His devotees to perform Sankirtan with extra zeal and vigour. He asked Lord Nityanand, Shri Advait Prabhu, Shri Haridas Thakur and other devotees to join Him, and lead a large procession of devotees chanting the name of Lord Hari. The procession went across the Navadvip and finally reached the house of the Kazi. The extraordinary glories of Sriman Mahaprabhu impressed the Kazi and he vowed that nobody from his dynasty or family would ever disturb the Sankirtan. He further told that on the day he broke the drum (Mridanga), that night in his dreams, a large fearful Deity with the body of human but face of a lion, sat on his chest and by the clattering of His teeth dared him to disturb Kirtan again and said, “You broke the drum of Hari Kirtan today, so now I will break your chest.” Then the cleric bared his chest to show the marks of a lion’s paw. Incidentally, a flame had burnt the beard and moustache of one of his soldiers who had gone out to stop the devotees from performing Kirtan. When the cleric pleaded for mercy, most merciful Lord Mahaprabhu pardoned him, and asked him to chant the name of Lord Hari. Even today, the descendants of that

cleric at Shridham Mayapur (Navadvip) participate in the circumambulation of the dham, and chanting of the name of Lord Hari.

The Lord snatches from His devotees in order to eat

There was a devotee, a Brahmin by the name Shuklambar, who lived in Navadvip. He would collect alms daily, come home, offer them to Krishna and then enjoy the prasadam. He was poor, but he was satisfied. He was always busy in chanting and remembering the name of Lord Krishna. Ordinary people recognized him as a beggar. Alas! Who can point out a devotee of Lord Chaitanya without Lord Chaitanya's mercy? Once, when Mahaprabhu was in ecstatic mood, Shuklambar came. He was carrying the bag on his shoulders in which he had collected the alms. Observing Shuklambar's love for Godhead, Mahaprabhu was pleased and He began to praise Shuklambar. Simultaneously Mahaprabhu took handful of rice out of Shuklambar's bag and began to eat it. Shuklambar was ashamed to see Mahaprabhu eating such poor quality rice. By such pastime Mahaprabhu illustrated that, although Shuklambar was not aware of the process of ritualistic offering to Lord Krishna, his rice offerings were still considered the best, as Krishna is more fond of the pure love by which something is offered, than He is by dry ritualistic prayers that are performed correctly but without love.

Similarly there was another devotee of the Lord, Shridhar, who was very poor. He used to live by selling banana leaves, vegetables, etc. Mahaprabhu often visited his shop and always snatched banana stem, etc. from him. Later on Mahaprabhu revealed His true form to that devotee.

Mahaprabhu's pastimes with Gopal Chapal

Shriman Mahaprabhu always stressed the significance of the verse, “harer-nam harer-nam harer-nam eva-kevalam, kalau nasty-eva nasty-eva nasty-eva gatir-anyatha” (Brihadnaradiya Purana) to His intimate devotees. He would perform sankirtan with them every night throughout the year, behind the closed doors of Shrivas Pandit’s house. Many fools and atheists would denounce them. One day their leader, a Brahmin by the name Gopal Chapal, came to Shrivas Pandit’s house. He was angry with envy when he found out that he could not enter the house. To bring ill fame to Shrivas, he placed Javaphul (a type of flower), red sandalwood powder, a bottle of liquor, etc. (these things are used while offering prayers to Goddess Durga) secretly at the main entrance door of Shrivas’s house. His intention was that in the morning, the people passing by the house would see all the items at Shrivas’s doorstep, and conclude that the chanting by Lord Mahaprabhu and His associates is all false, and that they all actually only offer prayers to Mother Durga. (Lord Chaitanya’s associates were pure devotees of Lord Krishna, this everybody knew) (If one desires to learn the difference between offering prayers to Durga and offering prayers to Krishna, one must refer to the 7th chapter of Shrimad Bhagavad Gita, verse no. 20 and 23).

When Shrivas noticed all the items at his doorstep the next morning, he wasn’t at all bothered by it. Instead, he began to laugh and told people, ‘I am a devotee of shakti (Durga), and here is the evidence.’ Gentlemen were not happy with such a development. They knew this to be a deed of blasphemers. They collectively removed all the items from there and washed the place with cow dung. On the other hand, Gopal Chapal had committed an offence against a pure devotee of Lord, and as a result he became sick and had an attack of leprosy. His body began to decay. He was scared and was in pain. One day he approached Mahaprabhu on the banks of Ganges and begged for His mercy. But that most merciful Lord Mahaprabhu scolded him and said, “O sinner! You were envious of my devotee, you tried to blaspheme him. I will ensure that not only in this birth, but in many millions of births, insects will feed upon you.” After accepting the renounced order of Life, when Mahaprabhu came to a place called ‘Aparadha Bhanjan Pata’ (the place of rescuing from offences) from Nilachal, Gopal Chapal fell at the feet of the Lord and begged for His mercy again. The Lord gave him a clue. The clue was, ‘If you want to get rid of all pains, approach Shrivas, against whom you had committed an offence. By his blessings, you will be rescued.’

Dead boy speaks

One day Lord Mahaprabhu was performing sankirtan at Shrivas – Angan, when Shrivas’s son died. Shrivas warned the women against crying and said, “The Absolute personality of Godhead is present here as a devotee and is ecstatically performing Sankirtan. If your screams and cries disturb Him, I will drown myself in Ganges.” The women got scared and stopped crying. After some time, however, the omnipotent Lord said, “Shrivas! I am not able to enjoy the dance, has something adverse happened?” Then Shrivas disclosed to Mahaprabhu that his son had just died, so the Lord said, ‘why did you not tell me earlier?’ The Lord went to the body of the boy and said, ‘Dear Son! Why did you leave Shrivas?’ The dead boy suddenly woke up and said, “Who can dare to violate the limits, prescribed by You? I lived the number of days prescribed for me to enjoy this body. My days are over, so I am going to accept another body. Who is whose son? Who is whose father? Everyone is here to suffer or enjoy the fruits of their past deeds, and so they suffer and/or enjoy those fruits and then leave. My Lord! Please accept my obeisances unto you and your associates.” Then the boy left his body again. Everyone present was spellbound. The grief that had previously gripped everyone had now disappeared completely. Mahaprabhu blessed Shrivas and said, ‘Shrivas! Consider Me and Nityanand as your sons.’

Shrivas was ecstatic and fell unto the feet of Lord, “O My Lord Gauranga Dev! You are my father in all my births; You are my mother, son and owner. I pray unto Your Lotus feet that I shall always remain your devotee.”

The Lord performs a Vraja pastimes play at the house of Shri Chandrashekhar Acharya

One day Lord Mahaprabhu expressed His desire to act in a drama with the theme of the pastimes of Vraja. The task of what the devotees should wear was left for

Shri Buddhimanta Khan to decide. All devotees dressed as per their roles. Lord Mahaprabhu announced that He would dance in the dress of Lakshmi, but that only one who has total control over his senses should be allowed to see His dance. The devotees were sad, when they heard this. Shri Advaita Prabhu as well as Shrivasa Pandit regarded themselves as non-elevated, and thus they were considering themselves as non-eligible to see the dance. Then Mahaprabhu smiled and told them, “There is no problem. Let everybody see my dance. Today, everybody will become a perfect Yogi (devotee) and nobody will be in illusion.”

All devotees along with their families, Mother Sachi, Shrimati Visnupriya and others came to the house of Shri Chandrashekhar Acharya to see the drama. Among the participants, Shri Advaita Acharya took the role of commentator, Haridas became guard, and Shrivasa dressed up as Shri Narad. Shrivasa in the guise of Shri Narad said, ‘I went to Vaikuntha (abode of Krishna) to have an audience with Lord Krishna, but there was nobody at Vaikuntha. Then I heard that Krishna has descended in Navadvip. Thus I came to Navadvip to participate in the pastimes of the Lord.’ By witnessing the part played by Shrivasa, Mother Sachi became so ecstatic that she fainted in her amazement. Shri Mahaprabhu dressed up as Rukmini and got submerged in the ecstatic moods of Rukmini (Princess of Vidarbha), when she accepted Lord Krishna as her husband after hearing about His features, qualities, courage, etc. from the visitors who had come to her palace. She was afraid of marrying Shishupal, thus she was morose and wept quietly, and simultaneously she wrote a letter to Shri Krishna. When Mahaprabhu was exhibiting that part, He began to cry like Rukmini as He Himself was feeling exactly like Rukmini. His tears were falling on the ground and He was writing with His finger. With a voice full of ecstatic feeling of Love for Krishna, He began to recite the verses of Rukmini’s letter. All devotees were jubilant to see and hear such a wonderful pastime. Thus ended the first part of the play.

In the second part, Gadadhar took the role of cowherd damsel and danced in ecstasy as Rama. Then Mahaprabhu dressed as His own internal potency – Radharani, and Nityanand Prabhu dressed as an elderly women messenger, came to the stage. Nobody, not even Mother Sachi could recognize Mahaprabhu

dressed as Radharani. Some saw Him as Lakshmi, some saw Him as Sita, some saw Him as Mahamaya, etc. as per their own feelings. By seeing Mahaprabhu dressed like this, even Lord Nityanand fainted in ecstasy. Many devotees were not able to control their emotions and began to cry. By seeing such pastimes of the Lord, nobody could guess how quickly the night had passed. All were sad to see the arrival of dawn, and wept. Then Mahaprabhu, in the mood of the Supreme Divine Mother, by dint of His mystic potency, breastfed milk to all the devotees present. This pleased everybody.

After this pastime, a strong, divine effulgence emanated and enveloped the house of Chandrashekhara Acharya. It continuously radiated for seven days by dint of Lord Chaitanya's staying inside the house.

Mahaprabhu reveals Himself according to the desire of each individual

Just as hundred rupees is the sum total of one, two, ten, fifty, etc. rupees, so similarly Lord Krishna has 64 qualities. When He descended as Lord Chaitanya in this fortunate Kali-yuga, He revealed Himself to His devotees in whichever form His devotee wanted to see Him. Out of causeless mercy, Lord Chaitanya revealed His various forms to a few, just like Shrivas saw Him as Ishvar, Murari Gupta saw Him as Varaha as well as in His four handed form, Lord Nityanand saw Him as six- handed form, Shri Advaita Acharya saw His Virata form (the form revealed at Kurukshetra), the scholar astrologer saw the form of the Supreme Lord, Chand Kazi saw His Narasimha form. He distributed love of Godhead even to animals such as lions, bears, elephants, deer, and also to trees, plants etc., while on the way through Jharikhanda in His later pastimes.

Mahaprabhu decides to renounce the world

Once, Lord Chaitanya was meditating on mellows of conjugal love for Krishna and He was experiencing the feeling of separation from Krishna which cowherd damsels of Vraja experience. Absorbed in the mood of the cowherd damsels, He was chanting ‘Gopi, Gopi’. Then a student with material faith and knowledge arrived. He could not understand the intense feelings of Mahaprabhu, and thus ridiculed Him and told Him to chant ‘Krishna, Krishna’ instead of ‘Gopi, Gopi’. Mahaprabhu, however, was absorbed in the mood of one of the Gopis, so in those emotions, with a stick in His hand, He ran after that boy in order to beat him, assuming him to be a member of the rival group of Krishna’s gopis. That student was scared and ran to his friends. There, he explained everything to his fellow - students. Everybody was annoyed and planned to attack Mahaprabhu. They were out of their mind, since they had ridiculed Mahaprabhu. They lost their knowledge. Out of pride, they continued to blaspheme Lord Mahaprabhu. On the other side, the Omnipresent Lord, indicated to His associates through a puzzle, that He would be accepting the renounced order of life shortly. The Lord said,

karilā pippli khaṇḍa kapha nivārite uliya aaro kapha badila dehete

(Chaitanya Bhagavata. Madhya 26/121)

(I prepared the medicine in order to cure the mucus, but this has increased the mucus in the body)

By this, Lord Mahaprabhu meant that although He appeared on this earth to liberate the people, in His current social position the people were only committing more offences, creating the opposite of the desired effect. Therefore, He chose to renounce the worldly life, because by looking at a renunciate sannyasi, they would have to pay Him the proper respect which is due for a sannyasi, and thus becoming liberated and rescued from offenses and sins. The Lord said, “Thereafter, I will evoke the love for Godhead in their peaceful minds. Then and thereafter, these rascals will be liberated; there is no other means.”

Mahaprabhu acts on His decision

Mahaprabhu was at home after deciding to renounce the worldly order of life, when Shri Keshav Bharati arrived in Nadia. Shri Mahaprabhu went to pay respects to him and invited him to His house. After serving Shri Keshav Bharati, Mahaprabhu requested him as follows, “You are as potent as the Lord in liberating these souls from this world. Therefore, please bestow your mercy upon me so that I may also be rescued.” Thus the Lord revealed His intentions of renouncing the world to him.

Shri Keshav Bharati said, “You are the Supreme Lord, you are omnipresent, whatever You will ask of me, I will honour that request. I can not act independently.” Then Keshav Bharati left for Katwa city, and later, Mahaprabhu also went to Katwa in order to accept the renounced order of life. Shri Nityanand, Shri Chandrashekhar and Shri Mukunda Datta, participated and performed all the necessary ritualistic ceremonies for the occasion.

Mahaprabhu is tricked

After exhibiting pastimes of household life for 24 years, Mahaprabhu accepted the renounced order of life from Shri Keshav Bharati at Katwa and immediately after, He was desperate to go to Shri Vrindavan Dham. However, Lord Nityanand, with the assistance of the cowherd boys and Shri Chandrashekhar Acharya tricked Him, and directed Him towards the house of Shri Advaita Acharya at Shantipur. Here devotees and Lord shared many pastimes and there even mother Sachi met the Lord in His dress as a sannyasi for the first time. Mother Sachi requested the Lord to go and stay in Puri Dham.

The liberation of the mayavadi Sarvabhaum

When Mahaprabhu saw the temple of Lord Jagannath from distance, He ran towards the temple and as He had an audience with Lord Jagannath, He was ecstatic. In His ecstasy He ran towards Lord Jagannath to embrace Him, but fell unconscious mid-way through, due to extreme ecstatic feelings. By the Lord's arrangement, a mayavadi named Sarvabhaum Bhattacharya was also there. He was surprised to see the transcendental symptoms upon the body of Lord Chaitanya, and thus, arranged to carry Him to his house. After three spans (almost 9 hours), Lord Nityanand and the other devotees arrived. They began 'Sankirtan', and then Mahaprabhu got up upon hearing the Sankirtan of devotees. Sarvabhaum Bhattacharya, used to justify his perception of the Lord as impersonal on the basis of Vedanta, and as a result, he had run out of any emotions

for Godhead. His heart had dried up from the false arguments he upheld in debating others. On the pretext of hearing the explanation of Vedanta from him, and after expanding on Sarvabhaum's lofty dissertation, something which Sarvabhaum had thought to be impossible, Lord Mahaprabhu totally changed his mindset and finally showed him His four handed Narayan form, and also His own two-armed form as Shyamasundar, holding flute in His hand. Sarvabhaum immediately offered obeisances and with folded hands he offered his prayers. By the mercy of Lord Chaitanya, his heart became compassionate. He, who once considered liberation from material life (Mukti) as the ultimate goal, now rejected it completely. He now chanted Krishna's name and relished the taste of the Name.

Mahaprabhu visits southern India

After liberating Sarvabhaum, Mahaprabhu took up the plea of meeting His brother Shri Vishvarup and travelled to southern India in order to preach. Lord Nityanand and other devotees requested a lot and finally sent Kala Krishna Das

with Him, to serve Him. On the way He bestowed His mercy upon Kurma Brahmin as well as Vasudev, who was suffering from leprosy. After that, on the banks of the Godavari river, Mahaprabhu met the Governor of Orissa, Rai Ramanand. Through His conversation with a pure devotee like Rai Ramanand, Mahaprabhu preached the world about the Lord and the ways to reach Him. Simultaneously, Mahaprabhu revealed to Rai Ramanand His special form of ‘Mahabhav- Rasaraj’ (Radha and Krishna as one). Apart from that, the views of logicians and other atheists were rejected and refuted, point-by-point. The philosophical foundation of Buddhism was demolished (rejected). He bestowed mercy on Venkat Bhatta. He rescued Shri Krishna Das from some Bhattathari renunciates. In this way He returned to Nilachal after bestowing His mercy on the devotees, and preaching to the sinners, yogis, and offenders of southern India.

King Prataparudra serves as a sweeper

When Mahaprabhu finally returned from southern India, devotees felt as if they had regained their consciousness. It was just like a drought hit area that at last receives a much needed spell of rain. Devotees gathered at Nilachal from all sides. All were enjoying pastimes with Lord Mahaprabhu. The ruler of Orissa, King Prataparudra (he reigned between 1497 AD – 1540 AD) was desperate to have an audience with Lord Mahaprabhu, but Mahaprabhu did not agree to see him. As a renunciate, Mahaprabhu avoided meeting women and rulers in order to set a perfect example for others. Many devotees such as Sarvabhaum and others, pleaded to Mahaprabhu on behalf of the king, but still the Lord remained unrelenting. When the king saw that he was bereft of Lord’s mercy, he, at the time of Lord Jagannath’s chariot festival began sweeping the road in front of the chariot. He could now see Lord Chaitanya dancing in Sankirtan and saw He was simultaneously present in all the seven different groups of His devotees. One day, after dancing ecstatically Mahaprabhu was resting in a garden known as ‘Balgandi’. Then, as per instructions of the devotees who wanted to help him, King Prataparudra went there alone and began reciting a verse from ‘Gopi Gita’, mentioned in Shrimad Bhagavatam, while massaging the Lotus Feet of the Lord. By hearing the verse, Mahaprabhu was ecstatic and to honour the desire of His

devotees, He embraced the king and bestowed His mercy upon him.

Mahaprabhu plans to return to His abode

Once upon a time, Shri Jagadanand Pandit returned to Puri after visiting Navadvip and Shantipur. Shri Advaita Prabhu sent a cryptic verse to Mahaprabhu through Jagadanand Pandit, “

bāulake kahiha,——loka ha-ila bāula bāulake kahiha,——hāṭe nā vikāya cāula
bāulake kahiha,——kāye nāhika āula bāulake kahiha,——ihā kahiyāche bāula”
(Chaitanya Charitamṛta, Antya, 19/20-21)

(The word baul is synonym of batul i.e. mad. The word aul is synonym of akul or desperate)

This verse means, “Please tell the One who is mad in ecstatic love of Godhead as a cowherd damsel, tell Him that people are now also ecstatic in love for Godhead. There is no place left where we can sell rice (love for Godhead) through our shop of distributing love for Godhead. Tell Him that Aul (Advaita Acharya) is not into materialistic worldly desires. Tell that madman (Mahaprabhu), that this madman (Advaita Acharya) has said like this. By this Shri Acharya meant that the purpose of Mahaprabhu’s descent was served. Now, the Lord may do whatever He himself desires.

Mahaprabhu laughed when He heard this puzzle and said, ‘Whatever Acharya desires’ and then He was silent. When Shrila Svarup Goswami-pad asked Mahaprabhu for the meaning of this puzzle, Mahaprabhu indicated by saying,

prabhu kahena,——‘ācārya haya pūjaka prabala āgama-śāstrera vidhi-vidhāne kuśala upāsanā lāgi’ devera karena āvāhana

pūjā lāgi’ kata kāla karena nirodhana pūjā-nirvāhaṇa haile pāche karena visarjana

tarajāra nā jāni artha, kibā tāñra mana

(Chaitanya Charitamṛta, Antya 19/25-27)

“Advaita Ācārya is a great worshiper of the Lord and is very expert in the regulative principles enjoined in the Vedic literatures. He invites the Lord to come and be worshiped, and to perform the worship He keeps the Deity for some time. After the worship is completed, He sends the Deity somewhere else. I do not know the meaning of this sonnet, nor do I know what is in Advaita Prabhu’s mind.”

Shri Mahaprabhu indicated that Shri Advaita Acharya had called upon Mahaprabhu again and again by offering prayers with the water of the Ganges and Tulasi leaves, on the banks of the Ganges. Thus Mahaprabhu descended to earth from Goloka. He told Svarup Damodar, “After completing the offering ceremony, the priest submerges the Deity in water, it seems that Acharya is now looking to do the same.”

After reading this verse from Acharya, Mahaprabhu’s intensity of feeling of separation from Krishna increased. In that heightened feeling of separation, Mahaprabhu sometimes rubbed His cheeks against the walls of Gambhira. Shri Svarup Damodar and Shri Ramanand Rai used to pacify the Lord by singing the glories of Krishna, etc. but Mahaprabhu’s feeling of separation would not subside.

Lord Mahaprabhu exhibited His pastimes of household-life for 24 years; while out of the remaining 24 years (as a sannyasi), He first exhibited pastimes of a renounced preacher, a sannyasi, travelling across India for 6 years. For the

remaining 18 years, He exhibited pastimes of associating with devotees and residing at Puri for 6 years, while for the last 12 years He exhibited pastimes of tasting the mellows of love of Godhead in the association of His personal associates and elevated pure devotees of the Lord. After that He returned to His abode, leaving devotees in mood of separation, in order to increase their desire for Him and make them mad in the devotional process of Godhead, Krishna.

The Mercy of Lord Chaitanya under any circumstance

śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya-dayā karaha vicāra vicāra karile citte pābe camatkāra

The composer of Shri Chaitanya Charitamrita, Shrila Krishna Das Kaviraj Goswami states in the above quoted verse that just by thinking about the potency of Lord Chaitanya's mercy, his or her mind will be bewildered. He distributed Love for Godhead in abundance and without any hesitation. His modus operandi was such that no one has any words to explain His magnanimity.

Just think about it! Is there any soul who did not receive His mercy? Whether one was sinner, offender, pious, poorest among poor, richest among rich, Brahmachari, begger, atheist or devotee, lady or vamp, cobbler or barber, tailor or animal killer, man or demigod, animal or bird, tree or plant, and whether in mother's womb, child, elderly or young; the Lord blessed them all and bestowed His mercy upon everyone.

We will now discuss some of His pastimes in relation to the examples given above.

Bestowing mercy to one in the mother's womb

Once, a householder devotee of Lord Chaitanya, Shri Sivanand Sen came to Nilachal for an audience with the Lord. Mahaprabhu told him, “Sivanand! This time when you will get a son, name him ‘Puri Das’.” At that time, the wife of Sivanand Sen was not pregnant at all. Almost eight years later, a son was born in the house of Sivanand Sen. As per the desire of the Lord, Sivanand Sen named his son ‘Paramanand das’ (nickname – Puri Das). After the birth of his son, Sivanand went to have an audience with Mahaprabhu in Puri, and he placed his son at the lotus feet of the Lord. Mahaprabhu cajoled the kid and called him ‘Puri Das’ and placed His big- toe in the child’s mouth.

Later on, the same boy ‘Puri Das’ (Kavi Karṇapūr) grew up to write works such as ‘Chaitanya Chandrodaya Nataka’, ‘Anand Vrindavana Champu’, ‘Gauragannodesha Dipika’, ‘Krishnagannodesha Dipika’, ‘Keshavashtaka’, ‘Brihadgannodesha Dipika’, ‘Alankara Kaustubha’, ‘Chaitanya Charitamrita Mahakavya’, ‘Krishnaika Kaumudi’, ‘Krishna Chaitanya Sahasra-nama’, Aryasataka, and a number of other scriptures.

One day, when Shri Puri Das was seven years old, his father Sivanand Sen took him to Mahaprabhu and tried to get him to offer his obeisances unto the Lord. Mahaprabhu asked the boy to speak out ‘Krishna, Krishna.’ Mahaprabhu tried a number of times, but not even once did the boy utter Krishna’s name. The boy’s father tried to have him say it as well, but to no avail.

Then Mahaprabhu said, “I have made numerous human beings, even trees and plants chant the name of Krishna, but I am unable to make this boy utter ‘Krishna’ .” Then Svarup Goswami smiled and said, “Dear Lord! You have granted him Krishna’s mantra (hymn). Since he has received it from You, he considers it his guru-mantra, therefore, he is not willing to disclose this mantra to others. He is chanting in his mind.” This was the Lord’s hidden mercy on that boy.

Here is another incident of direct mercy:

The next day, when Sivanand Sen came to Mahaprabhu with his son, the Lord said, “Puri! Read some verse.” Puri was only seven years of age. He had not started taking any formal education yet, but still by the Lord’s order he recited the following verse:

śravasoh kuvalayam akṣṇor añjanam uraso mahendra- maṇi-dāma

vṛndāvana-ramaṇīnām maṇḍanam akhilaṁ harir jayati (Chaitanya Charitamṛta Antya 16/74)

“All glories to Lord Hari, Who is like a blue lotus (earrings) to the ears, like eye-liner to the eyes and like a necklace made of blue emeralds resting on the chests of the young cowherd damsels of Shri Vrindavan.”

When Puri Das composed and recited this new verse everybody was astonished, and they were pleased to learn that the special mercy of Lord Chaitanya (which can make the impossible possible), the mercy that is desired by Brahma and other Demigods, had been bestowed on this boy since his childhood.

Narayani receives the Lord’s mercy during her childhood

Narayani was niece of Shrivasa Pandit, who is an intimate associate of Lord Chaitanya. One day, Lord Mahaprabhu asked Narayani to chant ‘Krishna’ – ‘Krishna’ and cry. Narayani was only 4 years old at that time. But due to the causeless mercy of Lord Chaitanya she became ecstatic by chanting Krishna’s name and began crying. Eventually she fell unconscious. Tears began to flow

from her eyes, falling from her cheeks on the floor. Later on, Mahaprabhu gave her betel nuts and its leaves which were tasted by the Lord Himself.

Shrila Vrindavan Das Thakur, the composer of ‘Shri Chaitanya Bhagavata’, which is an important scripture depicting the pastimes of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, was the only son of that same Narayani.

Also, Shri Mahaprabhu gave special blessings to devotees like Shri Raghunath Bhatta, Shri Achyutanand, Shri Raghunandan and Shri Gopal Bhatt due to their services unto Him during their childhood.

Shri Raghunath Das Goswami – A youth is blessed

During youth, one generally has so much vigour for fulfilling one’s desires that humans forget that they were given this precious human life and golden chance by the mercy of the Absolute. Man spends his youth in earning money so that he or she is able to fulfil their desires and serve their family. The most merciful Lord Chaitanya turned the tables for those youths by dint of His Causeless Mercy. Shrila Raghunath Das Goswami is a perfect example of this. When Lord Chaitanya bestowed His mercy upon him, Shrila Raghunath Das became ecstatic. His greed for Krishna grew so intense, that he broke all the barriers and shackles (like watchmen, money, beautiful wife, etc.) that were holding him back, and ran to Shri Gaura.

Raghunath’s devotion for the Lord and his moroseness towards material life, makes him a perfect example for householders as well as bachelors and renunciates. Shrila Raghunath Das Goswami composed wonderful works, like Dana Carita (Danakeli – Cintamani), Stavavali and Mukta Carita.

Ramanand Ray – blessed when he matured

During the days when the elder son of Shri Bhavanand Ray, Shri Ramanand Ray, was Governor of Rajamahendri (Southern Orissa) which was under the rule of King Prataparudra, he one day met the all-attractive Shri Mahaprabhu on the banks of Godavari. Riding a palanquin while being accompanied by scholarly Brahmins and few persons blowing on trumpets, Ramanand Ray was going for a dip in Godavari when he saw Lord Mahaprabhu. He was at once attracted to the Lord, at first glance. He was lost in the beauty of Lord Chaitanya and offered his obeisances to this unparalleled renunciate. The Lord immediately embraced him. A current ran through the body of Ray. He requested Mahaprabhu to stay for 5 to 7 days. The Lord agreed, and had him express in detail the actual means and ends of human life, as well as the glories of the Shri Radha's love for the Absolute God-head. Later on, Mahaprabhu, out of His causeless mercy, revealed His Mahabhav-Rasaraja form (form in which Radha and Krishna are together) to him, thereby showing Him His actual identity.

By the order of the Lord, Ramanand Ray left all his kingly duties behind and moved to Nilachal, near the Lord. When the Lord would feel deep pangs of separation from Krishna, Ramanand Ray along with Svarup Damodar would console and satisfy Him by reciting the devotional songs and other verses. Ray Ramanand is a pure devotee, scholar, and a devotee with the taste of highest love of Godhead, etc. During the last 12 years of Mahaprabhu on earth, only he and Svarup Damodar accompanied the Lord.

Apart from him, Lord Chaitanya blessed the Finance Minister and Prime Minister of king of Bengal (Hussein Shah), Shri Rupa and Shri Sanatan respectively, when they passed their youth.

Sarvabhaum Bhattacharya – blessed during old age

Shriman Nityanand Prabhu broke Mahaprabhu's symbol of the renounced order of life, the danda, or stick, and threw it into the Bhargi River. By this pastime, the Lord taught the world that for the Lord and his purest devotees there is no need to follow all the rules and regulations, as prescribed in scriptures for advancing in spiritual life. One day, Mahaprabhu felt deep desire to obtain an audience with Lord Jagannath, so He ran towards the temple, leaving all the devotees behind. This pastime was performed because the Lord wanted to bestow His mercy on Sarvabhaum Bhattacharya. Mahaprabhu was ecstatic as soon as He saw Lord Jagannath in the temple. His ecstasy grew and He fell unconscious. The symptoms of transcendental love appeared on His body. When Sarvabhaum saw this, he understood that Mahaprabhu wasn't an ordinary man, so he arranged to bring Mahaprabhu to his house.

When Sarvabhaum learnt that this renunciate's maternal grandfather (Shri Nilambar Chakravarti) was a friend of his father, he became very affectionate, just like a relative and was curiously attracted towards the Lord's youth. He thus told Gopinath Acharya, "He is very young. The mind of a young one is always volatile. I shall explain Vedanta to Him, which will enable Him to shun the world forever. This will protect His renounced order'.

Gopinath could not tolerate this sort of talk. He scolded Sarvabhaum and tried to explain him about the actual position of Mahaprabhu. He said, 'Bhattacharya! You are unaware of His glories. He is extreme in all the symptoms of being Omnipotent, i.e. He has all the symptoms of God. And He is the Absolute Personality of Godhead.'

But Sarvabhaum's mind was already occupied with negative thoughts, therefore, the words of Gopinath Acharya did not convince him (Lord and His pastimes descends only in the heart of a surrendered soul).

When they were debating, most merciful Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in order to bestow His mercy on Sarvabhaum, interrupted them and said to Sarvabhaum, “You are a spiritual master of the world and are well-wisher of everybody. I took the renounced order early in life, I do not know what is good and what is bad, so please have mercy on me. I will do whatever you say.” Then Sarvabhaum proceeded to preach Vedanta to Mahaprabhu for one week. Sarvabhaum observed that this young man was listening intently but wondered whether He was able to understand anything he said, as during the whole week Mahaprabhu neither said ‘yes’ nor said ‘no’. On the eighth day, he said, “You heard about Vedanta for seven days, and did not utter a single word. You kept quiet throughout. Did you understand anything?” Mahaprabhu replied, “I am fool and illiterate. You asked me to listen, so I am listening. So far learning is concerned, whatever you said on Vedanta I have understood, but your interpretation was very confusing. It seems your illustrations have hidden the actual meaning of the Vedanta’s verses, and this make me restless.” Sarvabhaum became furious from this answer and began debating, but All- knowledge Lord Mahaprabhu defeated him by dint of proof, verses and logic on the basis of the Vedic scriptures.

Later on, when Sarvabhaum expressed his desire to hear the explanation of ‘ātmārāmāś ca’ (Śrīmad Bhagavatam 1.7.10), a verse of Shrimad Bhagavatam, Mahaprabhu requested him to explain it first. As he was a scholar, he gave nine different meanings of the particular verse. When Mahaprabhu, without embracing any word uttered by Sarvabhaum, explained that verse in another eighteen ways, Sarvabhaum could remember the words of Gopinath Acharya that, Mahaprabhu is none other than Krishna. He felt ashamed that he tried to establish himself in front of Lord, and he began to cry. He fell unto the lotus feet of the Lord and surrendered unto Him by accepting himself (Sarvabhaum) as an offender and a sinner. Mahaprabhu desired to bestow His special mercy upon him. Thus, Mahaprabhu revealed His four-handed form of Narayan to him, and then Mahaprabhu revealed His Shyamasundar form holding the flute in His hands, to him. In this way, Mahaprabhu bestowed His mercy on the scholar of Puri kingdom and atheist debater. That is why, Shrila Krishna Das Kaviraj Goswami offers his prayers unto Lord Mahaprabhu as follows:

naumi taṁ gauracandraṁ yaḥ kutarka-karkaśāśayam sārva-bhaumaṁ sarva-

bhūmā bhakti-bhūmānam ācarat

(Chaitanya Charitamrta Madhya 6.1)

“Due to regular debating, Sarvabhaum, who had forgotten the original truth and had lost his sense of compassion, was blessed with devotion by the mercy of the omnipresent Gaurachandra. I offer my respectful obeisance’s unto that Gaurachandra.”

Shri Shridhar: blessing unto poor

Shridhar was a poor Brahmin. His sole means of earning his livelihood was through the sale of vegetables. He used to sell the vegetables and banana tree against his purchase of the same. Whatever he earned throughout the day, after selling those, 50% of the income he offered to mother Ganges and 50% he used for his living. He was a truthful man. Thus whatever selling price he used to say once, he never budged from that price. People knew about his honesty, and used to purchase vegetables from him.

Shridhar used to loudly chant the name of Lord Hari throughout the night. Most merciful Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu used to purchase flowers from banana trees, stem of banana tree, banana, etc. from the shop of Shridhar daily. However, Lord used to quarrel daily with him for few moments citing some reason or other. On certain occasion, finding no reason to quarrel, Lord would pick up a vegetable, pay 50% of the amount and begin moving. Then Shridhar would stand up and snatch the vegetable from the hands of Lord. Thus the quarrel, snatching and leg pulling between the two went on and on.

The Lord would remark, “Why Shridhar? I wonder. You have lots of money, so why do you snatch those bananas from my hand? You earn money from me and then offer nice things to mother Ganges, so what harm it will do to you, if you would give me some discount? Listen, You offer your obeisances to the Ganges, but I am the father of the Ganges.” Shridhar would place his hands on his ears

and would say, ‘Sir, if you do not wish to pay, it is alright but do not say like this.’

Mahaprabhu always used the leaf of banana tree (bought from Shridhar) as a plate for eating food. The Lord would always consume green leafy vegetables bought from his shop along with rice. This is an old saying of Lord, ‘He snatches the things of His devotees for own consumption, but never looks at delicious offerings of wicked or non-devotees.’

One day, Shri Mahaprabhu told Shridhar, ‘Shridhar! Please have a look at My Form. I am pleased with your service and endeavour; thus If you wish I can award you all eight mystical powers (siddhis).’ The exalted personality Shridhar looked straight at Him and saw the Lord as Shyamasundar, with pale blue skin colour and flute in hand. Lord Balaram was on His right side, Chaturmukha – Panchamukha (Brahma – Shiva) and other demigods were offering prayers unto the Lord. On the back of the Lord a huge umbrella was formed by the hoods of serpents. Sanak, Narad and Shukadev were offering prayers with folded hands unto the Lord. By seeing all this Shridhar became ecstatic and he lost external consciousness due to ecstasy.

Suklambar Brahmachari – blessing a beggar

Already covered in this book under the heading “The Lord snatches from His devotees in order to eat.”

King Prataparudra – blessing a rich man

(King Prataparudra had tried a number of times to obtain the mercy of Lord Mahaprabhu. Though he was a king, he swept the roads in front of Lord Jagannath's chariot and sprinkled sandalwood water on the path).

During Lord Jagannath's chariot festival (Jagannath Ratha Yatra), Mahaprabhu manifested Himself in seven forms and danced in all the seven groups of His devotees, which were performing Sankirtan in front of the chariot. After dancing, Mahaprabhu was taking rest at a garden called 'Balgandi', where He was absorbed in ecstatic feelings. As per the instructions of devotees, King Prataparudra, dressed as a devotee approached Him there and began massaging His lotus feet. Simultaneously, he recited verse of the 'Gopi-Gita' from Shrimad Bhagavatam. Mahaprabhu, upon listening to the verse was filled with emotions and immediately embraced the king. Keeping in mind the King's interest in serving the pure devotees, the Lord did not consider him a materialist but a devotee, and blessed him.

Blessing a pure soul – a Brahmin which drank only milk

Once, a Brahmin learned that Mahaprabhu performed Sankirtan throughout the night at the house of Shrivas. He developed a keen desire to see that Sankirtan and dance. He was a bachelor and since childhood he had taken up the vow of penance by which he would take only milk and fruits to sustain his life. He had never committed any sin throughout his whole life. He pleaded Shrivas to allow him a place in his house, so that he (Brahmin) would be able to see the Sankirtan and dance. Keeping in mind his penance, bachelorhood, sinless life, etc. Shrivas relented and agreed, but asked him to stay hidden.

That day, Mahaprabhu began Sankirtan with His devotees, but after some time He complained, "I am not experiencing the pleasure and excitement I normally

feel, it seems as though some outside person is present.” Shrivas replied, “None of the sinners have come here. Only a sinless young bachelor, who has eaten only fruits and milk throughout his life, such a Brahmin has come with the desire in his mind to listen to your Sankirtan and watch your dance.” Mahaprabhu was furious. He immediately asked that Brahmin to leave.

The Brahmin was ashamed and out of fear he left Shrivas’s house. But he was not angry, instead he was wandering in his mind, “Today is my lucky day. I got punished for the offense I committed, I was able to see Vaikuntha with my naked eyes today.”

Like others, the Brahmin did not say any bad word about Mahaprabhu or His devotees. Because of that, Mahaprabhu blessed him soon after. He did so by calling upon that bachelor Brahmin and by placing His Lotus Feet on his head and by blessing him.

Jagai and Madhai – blessing rascals

Already covered in this book under heading “Shri Nityanand Prabhu and Shri Haridas Thakur as preachers of the Holy Name.”

Gopinath - blessing a culprit

Once, some people approached Mahaprabhu and told him, “Lord! The son of King Prataparudra is going to make Gopinath (elder brother of Shri Ramanand Ray and son of Shri Bhavanand) climb atop a platform and then they will push him over a sword in order to kill him. Should you wish so, his life could be

spared. Shri Bhavanand along with his family is serving you, thus that son of his is among your servants. Therefore, you must protect him”. Lord Mahaprabhu asked, “Why does the king want him dead?” Then, the people started explaining.

They said, “O Lord! Gopinath Pattanayak is the brother of Ray Ramanand. He collects the tax from people on behalf of the king and hands that money over to the king. The king earned 2 lac (1 lac = 100,000) kahana (1 kahana = 6 new coins). When the king asked for his money, Gopinath stated that he did not have any money with him to give to him immediately, so he begged to give him time so that in due time he would be able to sell his property and return the money. Gopinath then asked the king to buy some 10 to 12 horses from him that he had in his possession. Then Gopinath brought those horses to the doorsteps of the king’s residence and tied them. The son of the king was expert in estimating the value of horses. Therefore, the king sent his son, along with an official to determine the cost of horses. The prince, however, purposely fixed a very low price, which Gopinath did not like.

The prince had a habit of moving his neck and looking above again and again, and therefore, Gopinath told the prince mockingly, “My horses neither move their neck nor look up again and again, thus their price should not be so low.” The prince stood there, furious after listening to the ridicule, thus he blasphemed Gopinath by making false allegations about Gopinath to the king. He told the king, “This Gopinath is not willing to pay us a single penny, and he will run away in disguise.” King Prataparudra answered, “Do whatever you see fit.” By this he meant, adopt any means to get back the money from him. Instead, the prince made him climb on a platform and is now planning to push him in a hole filled with swords. (Lord! now may you please save him).”

After listening to every word, Mahaprabhu expressed His unhappiness and said, “If Gopinath is not ready to return the money of the king, then the king is not guilty. He collected tax in the name of king, spent money upon himself, and without fearing the king, spent money on prostitutes and dancers (is this the way to act on behalf of king?). One can only work for a kingdom if he does not eye the wealth of kingdom. He collected the wealth for kingdom and spent it for himself.” While this was being said by Mahaprabhu, some men came running to

Him and said, “Lord! Gopinath is already on top of the platform. Now soldiers have arrested Vaninath (the brother of Gopinath) and his family.” Shri Mahaprabhu said, “Listen! The king will definitely take his share of money. I am in the renounced order of life, so what can I do about this?”

When the devotees of the Lord, like Shri Svarup and others requested the Lord, “Lord! the whole family of Ramanand Ray is in your service. Now that they are in danger, You should not shun them at this difficult time.” Mahaprabhu then angrily replied, “Then you want to order me to go to the king. Do you all desire that I should go and beg from the king? The worth of a Brahmin or renunciate begging for alms is only 5 ganda (=10 kaudi = 6 new coins), so who will give them 2 lac kahana, even if they beg for them?”

Suddenly a few more people came running and said, “Lord! Soldiers are going on top to push Gopinath from the platform unto the sword-filled hole.” Then all devotees prayed Mahaprabhu for his rescue. Mahaprabhu said, “I am a beggar in the renounced order of life. I can’t help. Therefore, if you all wish to save him then you all must go and pray unto the lotus feet of Lord Jagannath. Lord Jagannath is the Absolute Personality of Godhead, He has all mystic powers, He can do everything, He can undo the done and vice-versa.” The instant Mahaprabhu said this, at some other place, the minister of the king, Harichandan said to king Prataparudra, “My dear king! Gopinath Pattanayak is your servant. Getting a servant killed is not good. You are supposed to collect lots of money from him, what purpose will it serve if you get him killed? We will lose our money. Better buy his horses for an appropriate price and rest of the money he will pay slowly and steadily; why kill him uselessly?” King remarked in surprise, “I was not aware that he was being killed. We only need the money from him. Harichandan! Immediately go and plan out something so that we get our money and he lives.”

When Harichandan approached the prince with the message from the king, Gopinath was immediately brought down from the platform. Shri Harichandan asked Shri Gopinath, “The money that you owe to the king, how do you plan to

return it?” Shri Gopinath said, “Please buy my horses for an appropriate price, the remaining sum I will pay back gradually in instalments. The prince was trying to kill me without giving it a second thought, what can I say about that?” After hearing Gopinath’s explanation, Shri Harichandan bought all the horses for an appropriate price and fixed the duration of time within which Gopinath was to return the money, and then sent him home.

Here, the Lord asked the people, “When soldiers arrested

Vaninath, what was he doing?” The people told Mahaprabhu, “He was chanting on his fingers without fear, ‘Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare’. When he counted hundred, he drew a line on his body.” The Lord was pleased to hear this. Who can understand the ways and means of the Lord’s mercy? (the Lord expressed an outward disinterest for Gopinath, but out of His causeless mercy, internally He motivated Harichandan and sent him to the King, thereby arranging for the release of Gopinath. Simultaneously the Lord arranged to exhibit the genuineness and dedication for the devotional process of Vaninath.

Blessing the sick – Amogh

After the chariot festival of Lord Jagannath and before leaving for Vrindavan, upon sincere requests by Shri Sarvabhaum Bhattacharya, Lord Mahaprabhu agreed to have food at his house for five days. During one of those days, when the wife of Shri Sarvabhaum served Mahaprabhu different varieties of food, Sarvabhaum’s son-in-law saw all those plates and ridiculed Mahaprabhu. Shri Sarvabhaum could not tolerate that Mahaprabhu was insulted, so he picked up a stick and ran after his son-in-law (Amogh) to hit him. Amogh ran away. The wife of Sarvabhaum cursed him to death. Although he was the husband of their daughter they decided never to come face to face with him again, since he dared to ridicule Mahaprabhu. The couple apologized for the incident to the Lord and sent Him to His place of stay.

That same night, cholera struck Amogh (as he had offended the Lord) and by morning he was on his deathbed. When Gopinath Acharya told Mahaprabhu about ailing condition of Amogh, most merciful Lord immediately went to him. Lord placed His hand on Amogh's chest and said, "Amogh, why you have arranged for envy to stay in your heart, where Lord should be staying?" By placing His hand on the chest of Amogh, Mahaprabhu granted him the right to chant the holy name of Hari. By hearing the sweet words of Mahaprabhu, and by receiving His touch, Amogh got up and began chanting 'Krishna – Krishna' and danced. Mahaprabhu laughed with pleasure by observing the result of the mercy He had bestowed upon Amogh, who was by then exhibiting various signs of transcendental love for Godhead in his body. Amogh got better again and became a devotee.

Blessing the sick – Vasudev Vipra

When Mahaprabhu was travelling across southern India, He came to Kurma Kshetra. There lived a Brahmin by the name Vasudev. He was suffering from leprosy and had insects feeding on his body due to leprosy. Whenever some insect would fall from his body, he would pick it up and place it back on his body. He received the news about the arrival of Mahaprabhu at night time. He thus went to have an audience with the Lord Who was staying at the house of Kurma Brahmin, but when he reached that place he learnt that Lord had already left. He fell unconscious out of extreme grief.

When he regained consciousness, he began to cry. Suddenly the Lord appeared before him and embraced him. By the mere touch of the Lord, all of his grief and disease disappeared, and his body turned handsome. Vasudev was surprised and joyful after receiving the special mercy of that most munificent Lord.

Blessing at the time of death – Shri Haridas Thakur

Shri Haridas Thakura is among the foremost devotees of Mahaprabhu. He was totally dedicated to chanting the name of Hari. His dedication became known when he refused to stop chanting the name of Lord Hari, after a Muslim cleric

ordered him to stop. Due to his refusal, that cleric ordered him to be beaten by a hunter, till death. (Since Haridas Thakur was a Muslim, by birth).

When the soldiers were hitting him along with the hunter, they repeatedly told him, “We will leave you alone, and the cleric will pardon you if you will stop chanting Krishna’s name. To that he replied (and we should follow this):

khaṇḍa khaṇḍa hai deha yāya yadi prāṇa tabu āmi vadane nā chāḍi hari-nāma
(Chaitanya Bhagavat, Adi, 16.94)

“Even if my body is dissected and I shall die as a result of that, still I will never stop chanting the name of Hari.”

Once, Shri Govinda (personal servant of Lord Mahaprabhu) went to deliver Mahaprasad to Shri Haridas, as per daily routine. Upon arriving he saw that Haridas Thakur was lying down and was chanting slowly. Govinda asked him to get up and take Mahaprasada. Shri Haridas replied, “Govinda! Today I will observe fast, otherwise I won’t be able to complete my daily number of chanting rounds, thus I can’t take prasad. But since you have brought Mahaprasad, I also can’t ignore this.” Then Haridas Thakur got up, paid his obeisances to Mahaprasad and took a bit of prasad.

The next day, Lord Mahaprabhu came to Shri Haridas’s place and asked for his well-being. Shri Haridas said, “My body is healthy but my intelligence and mind are not.” So the Lord asked, “What disease has made your mind and intelligence unhealthy?” He replied, “I am unable to complete my designated rounds of chanting, this is my disease.” Lord said, “Haridas! Now that you have grown old, reduce your rounds of chanting. Yours is a transcendental body, why are you

practicing such penance? You have descended to deliver the people and you have already preached the holy name of the Lord and the glories of His holy Name, so now you should chant less rounds of japa.” Haridas said, “My Lord! Please listen to my request.”

Shri Haridas said, ‘O most merciful one! I was born as a low caste, thus my body is not respectable. I am a lowly, sinner and my intelligence is always indulging in various fruitive activities. I am an untouchable. Looking at my face is a sin. My Lord! Please have mercy upon me and accept me. You have rescued me from hell (Raurava – a type of hell) and elevated me to Vaikuntha (the abode of Vishnu). You are the independent Lord and so are your desires. Whatever way You want, people dance as per your desires. I have danced as per your wishes. Though I am low caste, a Muslim, I have accepted the food of the oblation ceremony of a Brahmin. My Lord, there has been a desire in my mind for many days now. I know that You are going to return to your abode soon. My Lord! Please do not let me see You return to Your Abode, I wish to leave before You leave this world. I wish to die while Your lotus feet lay upon my heart, while I am looking at your beautiful face and while I am chanting your name ‘Shri Krishna Chaitanya’, this is my only desire. My wish will only be fulfilled if out of Your mercy, You will accept my prayers. I want to leave this wretched body in Your presence. O My Lord! this is my only desire and its fulfilment is in Your Hands.’

Shri Mahaprabhu replied, “Haridas! Whatever you desire, merciful Lord Krishna will fulfil that. But you want to take away My peace and leave Me here, this is not correct.” Shri Haridas fell unto the lotus feet of Lord and said, “O Lord! Please fulfil this desire of mine. Lord, if my insectile lowly soul will leave Your pastimes, it is not going to bring any harm to the pleasure of Your pastimes. If an ant dies, what harm does it bring to earth? O my Lord! You grant boons to Your devotees and I am just a shadow of a devotee (I am not your devotee, I have only a glimpse of your devotion in me), Thus my Lord!

Please fulfil my desire. Now it is a bit late, so please proceed to Your place of stay for other pastimes. Please grant me Your audience tomorrow, while returning from Lord Jagannath temple.” The Lord embraced Shri Haridas and

went towards the sea for a dip. The next day, the Lord along with His devotees went to have an audience with Lord Jagannath and then quickly went to meet Shri Haridas. He stood there in front of him. Shri Haridas offered his respects to Lord and other devotees. Shri Mahaprabhu asked him, “Prabhu! How are you?”. He replied, ‘All Your mercy’. Then Mahaprabhu began Maha-Sankirtana in the courtyard. Shri Vakreshvar began dancing and Shri Svarup Goswami and other devotees began to perform Sankirtan and dance around Shri Haridas. The Lord glorified Shri Haridas to Shri Ramanand Ray and Shri Sarvabhaum Bhattacharya.

While glorifying Shri Haridas, Lord was speaking so quickly and so much that one imagined Him speaking with five mouths simultaneously. The Lord’s pleasure was increasing as he went on glorifying His devotee. Upon hearing the glories of Shri Haridas, Shri Ramanand and other devotees were amazed, and they immediately offered prayers unto his feet. Then, Shri Haridas made Mahaprabhu sit in front of him and he fixed his gaze at the lotus face of Lord. He held and placed the feet of Lord unto his heart. He took dust from the feet of all devotees and placed it on his own head. He was chanting ‘Shri Krishna Chaitanya’ continuously and with his gaze fixed on the Lotus Face of Lord, tears were flowing from his eyes. Then he took his last breath by uttering the name of ‘Shri Krishna Chaitanya’.

By observing his passing like a great yogi, everybody remembered passing of Shri Bhishma Pitamaha (Mahabharata). Everywhere raised the sounds of Hare Krishna

– Hare Krishna. Shri Mahaprabhu was flowing in ecstasy. He lifted the body of Shri Haridas and began dancing in the courtyard. Experiencing Mahaprabhu’s ecstasy, all devotees joined Him in dancing and chanting. After some time, Mahaprabhu took the body of Shri Haridas towards the sea.

After arriving there, they arranged for the bathing of Shri Haridas’s transcendental body in the sea. Shri Mahaprabhu said, “From this day on, this sea has become a holy place (tirtha) for a bath.” All devotees drank the water

collected after washing the feet of Shri Haridas. Items such as cloth, sandalwood paste and stick, cloth-strips (Patta-dori), which had been offered to Lord Jagannath, were placed on the body of Shri Haridas. Then his body was rested after digging a hole in the nearby sand. All devotees gathered for Sankirtan and Shri Vakreshvar Pandit danced. Shri Mahaprabhu recited 'Hari-bol, Hari-bol' and sprinkled sand particles on the body of Shri Haridas with His hand. He was the first to do this. Then all devotees sprinkled the sand and prepared a dome on his Samadhi (place of final resting). A wall was erected around the Samadhi. Mahaprabhu danced and performed Sankirtan while circumambulating the Samadhi. The tumultuous sound of 'Hari' rose to skies. Then Mahaprabhu along with His devotees performed some playful pastimes in sea.

Mercy on the pet dog of a devotee

When Lord Mahaprabhu returned to Nilachal from Shri Vrindavan, Shri Svarup Damodar Goswami spread the news of the Lord's return across the whole of Gauda Desh (Bengal). Mother Sachi and other devotees of Gauda were pleased to learn about the Lord's arrival, thus, residents of Kulina, residents of Shrikhandra and other devotees all together started for Nilachal. On the way, there were various road-tax collection centers; Shri Sivanand Sen took care of all. He also arranged for food and lodging for all devotee travellers. Along with devotees, a dog was also travelling. Shri Sivanand Sen fed it as well, and also took care of it. On the way, while crossing a river, a sailor (resident of Orissa) refused to allow the dog on his boat. Shri Sivanand Sen turned morose after hearing this. He paid 800 kaudi (kaudi was local currency at that time) to the sailor and arranged for the dog to ride the boat across the river.

By providence Sivanand stayed with the tax collector. The servant forgot to feed the dog. Sivanand arrived by night at the camp and inquired from his servant whether he had given food to the dog. The servant stated that they forgot to do so. Sivanand was unhappy to hear that. He sent 10 people in search of that dog. They could not locate the dog and soon they were tired of searching. Sivanand did not take dinner that night and slept. All the devotees were surprised and

wondered where the dog had gone off to.

After some time, everybody forgot about the dog and moved forward enthusiastically to meet Mahaprabhu, and finally met Him in Nilachal. There, Mahaprabhu took all of the devotees for an audience with Lord Jagannath and then sat together to relish the Prasadam. Then the Lord sent everybody to his or her place of stay. Next morning, when all devotees came to Mahaprabhu, they saw the same dog (which was lost on the way), sitting at some distance from the Lord. The Lord was feeding him coconut Prasadam and was smiling. Simultaneously He was saying 'Say Shri Krishna – Rama – Hari' to the dog. That dog was eating coconut Prasadam and was uttering 'Krishna – Krishna'. Everybody was astonished to see this.

When Shri Sivanand saw that dog, he offered his obeisances to him and asked for forgiveness for his offence of neglecting him. Next day, that fortunate dog left the world in front of all, after having an audience with Lord, and while chanting Krishna – Krishna.

Mahaprabhu blesses carnivorous animals, such as tigers

Most munificent Lord Mahaprabhu was travelling across the Jharikhanda, while going to Vrindavan. He was feeling ecstatic and chanting the name of Lord Krishna while walking through the forest. The female deers after listening to His sweet voice began walking beside Mahaprabhu. Mahaprabhu put His hand on their backs. Suddenly 4 to 5 tigers arrived. They also began walking beside Mahaprabhu.

When Mahaprabhu asked them to chant 'Krishna – Krishna', they began dancing

together and started chanting ‘Krishna – Krishna’. They embraced each other and even kissed each other. Mahaprabhu laughed when He saw this. This mood spread across the forest and soon all herbivorous, carnivorous and omnivorous animals were ecstatic and chanting the name of Krishna. The Lord moved ahead, leaving them in that blissful state.

Lord Mahaprabhu distributed Love of Godhead to all, even to trees, plants and animals. All were intoxicated with the Love for Godhead. In Navadvip, the Lord took care of weavers (who create cloth by hand), cowherd boys, sellers of conch shells, gardeners, sellers of betel leaf, astrologers and even drunkards, beggars, gamblers, bigamists, thieves, and dacoits. None were deprived of Love of Godhead.

Now, how can we count the number of Lord Mahaprabhu’s blessing pastimes? Moreover, who are we to explain the extent of His mercy? Even if we cut all the trees of all the forests, make pencils of each tree that was cut down, and having all the water of all seas converted into ink, and having all souls handed over a pencil, and having all of them in all universes keep on writing for an unlimited amount of time, even then we won’t be able to write about even a drop of the unlimited glories of Mahaprabhu’s mercy.

You know why? There are innumerable Avataras (descents)

of the Lord, so what makes the glories of Mahaprabhu so special? In all other Avataras, the Lord exhibited pastimes based on a certain cause and condition. What to say of Avataras, even Lord Krishna Himself could not relish the taste of Love of Godhead during His pastimes on earth, as the methodology to taste that Love for Godhead was known only to Shrimati Radharani. But as Mahaprabhu, the key to that methodology came in the hands of Shri Krishna. So, Lord

Krishna, as Chaitanya Mahaprabhu tasted the nectar of Love for Godhead and side-by-side distributed the same to all.

Shri Shikshashtaka

(Composed by Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu)

Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, being the Supreme Lord Himself, is the best scholar. He did not compose any independent scripture, rather He taught us to follow the teachings of Srimad Bhagavatam. However, in order to explain the glories of the chanting of Harinam, the qualification for chanting Harinam as well as the gradual progression in the path of devotion and its confidential achievements, He preached the Shikshastaka. So He gave the following eight verses to teach us:

1st verse of Shri Shikshashtaka

ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam bhava-mahā-dāvāgni-nirvāpaṇam śreyaḥ-kairava-
candrikā-vitaranam

vidyā-vadhū-jīvanam ānandāmbudhi-vardhanam

prati-padam pūrṇāmṛtāsvādanam sarvātma-snapanam

param vijayate Śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam

“Let chanting of the Holy Name Shri Krishna, completely, loudly in the company of devotees and without tenfold offences, which can bestow seven principal attainments— viz. cleansing of the mirror of the mind, extinguishing of the forest fire of birth, death and threefold afflictions, bestowing eternal soothing benefit like moonlight, life of spiritual learning i.e. awakening of the real self, increasing of the ocean of bliss, bestowing at every step sweet taste of complete transcendental ambrosia, holy immersion of body-mind-real self— be supremely glorified.”

2nd verse of Shri Shikshashtaka

nāmnām akāri bahudhā nija-sarva-śaktis tatrārpitā niyamitaḥ smaraṇe na kālaḥ
etādṛṣi tava kṛpā bhagavan mamāpi durdaivam īdṛśam ihājani nānurāgaḥ

“O Supreme Lord! Your Holy Name bestows all kinds of eternal welfare to the conditioned souls. You have unlimited names such as Krishna, Govinda and Gopīnāth. You have bestowed all powers to Your Holy Names. There are no restriction of time, space— rules and regulations, for utterance and remembrance of the Holy Names. O Lord! You are so merciful to the conditioned souls i.e. out of compassion you have made easy for the conditioned souls to remember and chant Holy Names, but due to my tenfold offences and my greatest misfortune I have got no liking for Holy Name.”

3rd Verse of Shri Shikshashtaka

tr̥ṇād api sunīcena taror iva sahiṣṇunā amāninā mānadena kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ

“The aspirant who is more humbler than a blade of grass, more forbearing than tree and who is completely devoid of desire for getting respect from others but giving due respect to all is eligible for doing Hari-kīrtan always.”

4th Verse of Shri Shikshashtaka

na dhanam na janam na sundarīm kavitām vā jagad-īśa kāmaya mama janmani
janmanīśvare bhavatād bhaktir ahaituki tvayi

“O Supreme Lord! I have no desire to attain wealth, manpower or erudition (desire for deceitful Trivarga— worldly piety, money and lust or even to merge oneself with the Impersonal Formless Brahma, i.e. ‘Mukti’— salvation, which is more deceitful). My only prayer is to get causeless one-pointed devotion to You.”

5th Verse of Shri Shikshashtaka

ayi nanda-tanuja kiṅkaram patitaṁ mām viṣame bhavāmbudhau

kṛpayā tava pāda-paṅkaja- sthita-dhūlī-saḍṛśaṁ vicintaya

“O Nandanandan (Shri Krishna, son of Nand Maharaj), in spite of my being your eternal servant, due to predicament of my own deeds, I am drowned in the terrible ocean of births and deaths. Out of compassion kindly think of me as dust particle of your Lotus Feet.”

6th Verse of Shri Shikshashtaka

nayanaṁ galad-aśru-dhārayā vadanam gadgada-ruddhayā girā pulakair nitaṁ vapuḥ kadā tava nāma-grahaṇe bhaviṣyati

“O Supreme Lord Shri Krishna! When will tears flow from my eyes like waves? When will my voice be choked up (will not be able to utter the complete Holy Name, words will be incoherent— not understandable to ordinary persons) and when will the whole body be horripilated (saturated with thrilling sensation) while chanting Your Holy name?”.

7th Verse of Shri Shikshashtaka

yugāyitaṁ nimeṣeṇa cakṣuṣā prāvṛṣāyitaṁ śūnyāyitaṁ jagat sarvaṁ
govinda-virahaṇa me

“O Govinda! Feeling Your separation, I am considering even a moment as an epoch. Tears are flowing from my eyes like torrents of rain, and the whole world is appearing void to me.”

8th Verse of Shri Shikshashtaka

āśliṣya vā pāda-ratām pinaṣṭu mām adarśanān marma-hatām karotu vā yathā
tathā vā vidadhātu lampaṭo mat-prāna-nāthas tu sa eva nāparaḥ

“Shri Krishna can crush this maidservant, devoted to His Lotus Feet, either by firmly embracing me or by mortifying me anywhere and everywhere by His profligate behaviour with any of His beloved gopīs, yet He remains my dearest beloved and nobody else.”

Words of Supreme Lord

bhavishyami ca caitanyah kalau sankirtanagame harinama pradanena
lokannistara yamayahama (Brahmayamale)

Shri Krishna Himself says, “I will descend as Shri Chaitanya, at the time of advent of period of Sankirtan in Kaliyuga. I will distribute the name of Hari and liberate all souls in this descent.”

Lord Shiva tells Parvati devi

svarna ditirama asritya navadvipe dvijalaye sampradatu bhaktiyogam
lokasyanugrahaya ca ya eva bhagavana krishno radhika prana vallabha

shrishtyadau sa jagannatho gaura asin maheshvari

(Ananta Sanhitayama)

“Hey Maheshvari! In the beginning of creation, the Lord who was known as Jagannath, and who in Dwapar-yuga appeared as Lord Krishna Chandra – lover of Shrimati Radhika, that same Lord shall appear as Gauranga in the house of an exalted Brahmin, in Navadvip Dham on the banks of the river Ganges, in order to distribute Love for Godhead and for the benefit of the world.”

treta me rama-lakhana the, dvapara me the krishna – balai, kaliyuga me ab nama huya hai – prema avtari gaura nitai. (Hindi Kirtana)

“He was Lord Rama-Lakshaman in Treta-yuga. In Dwapar- yuga, They appeared as Krishna-Balarama. In the Kali-yuga, They have taken the name of Gaura-Nityanand, the bestowers of the Love of Godhead.”